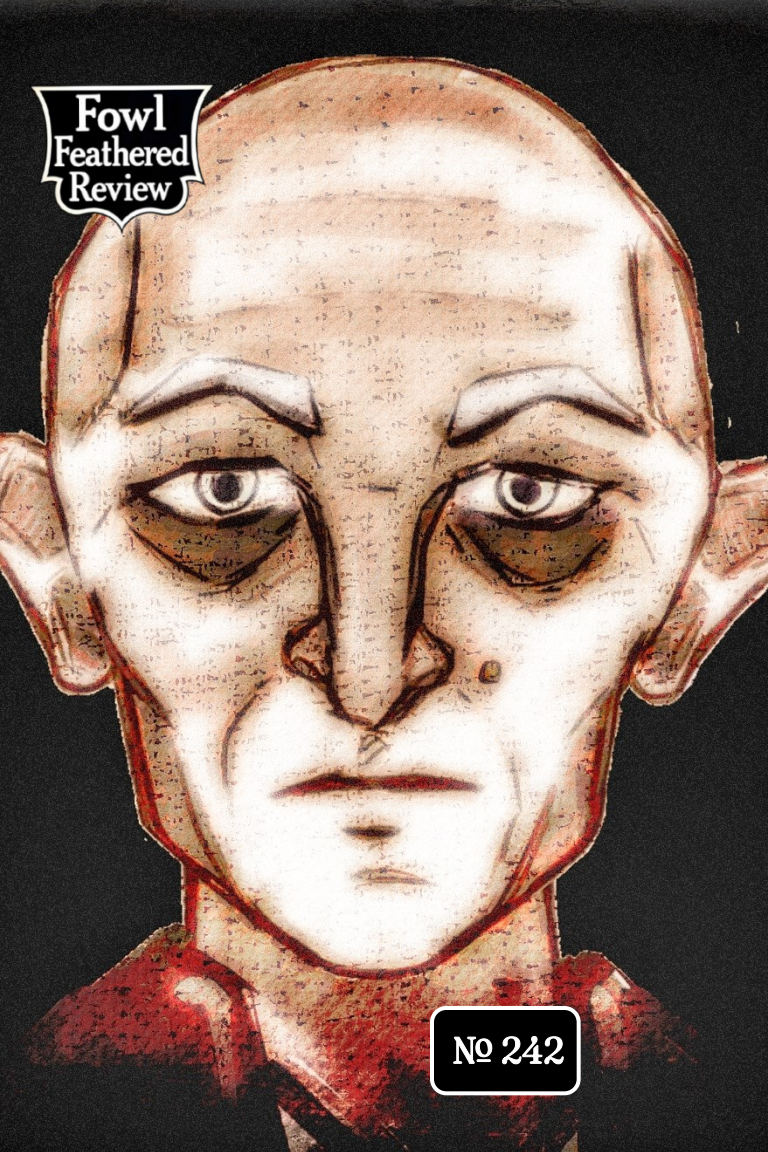

Fowl
Feathered
Review
№ 242

ISSUE № 239:

Will a librarian from the moon throw the ball under that delectable buffalo?

About the Assemblage

The FFR is no longer a journal or even a "Necrosign." It's a shared frequency—specifically the sound of a 1988 Mitsubishi Mirage idling in a parking lot at 3:00 AM. We don't curate; we just leave the back door unlocked. We are a collection of "important locals"—those who are durable because we are too tired to be fragile. If the work feels like it's trying to be "Art," we will likely use it to level a wobbly table.

The Staff (The Custodians of the Sink)

- Virgil Kay: Still the Final Arbiter, currently preoccupied with the aerodynamics of a falling bagel.
- Silent Bill: Promoted to *Chief of Tactical Non-Sequiturs*. He handles the "Necessary

Pauses" by simply walking out of the room mid-sentence.

- Unkie Bob: Now specializing in *Casual Entropy*. He doesn't sabotage the structure anymore; he just forgets to tighten the bolts.
- The Unnamed Dishwasher: (Not on the masthead). He just crashed in. He's wearing a windbreaker. He's currently scrubbing a scorched pot with the intensity of a man performing heart surgery. Don't look at him. He's the soul of the operation now.

THE PERPETUAL PENDING PLEDGE:

The Review is not for sale; it is freely given. All incoming funds are Sacramental Offerings consecrated not for service rendered, but to sustain the metabolically necessary Obsession8888. Our official registry is no longer numeric; it is an unassailable frequency defined as Vi · ∞ · 432Hz.

SUBMISSION PROTOCOL (CASUAL MODE)

1. The Work: Send us 2 to 953 fragments. They can be poems, paintings, or transcriptions of overheard arguments about bowling.

2. The Presentation: No "Cover Letters" listing your awards. We don't care where you went to school; we care if you can stand up after taking a hit. Tell us your favorite type of industrial fastener instead.
3. The Offering: The Perpetual Pending Pledge remains. It's still free. But if you must send something, send a 12-inch sandwich.
    - The Kewpie Clause: If there is no Kewpie Mayonnaise on the sandwich, Virgil will use your manuscript to wipe the counter. Kewpie is the only thing standing between us and the "Absolute Cosmic-Cluck."
4. The Delivery: Drop it off. Or don't. The auction is never over, and we're just waiting for the next honk.

Note: If you hear the sound of dishes clattering in the back, ignore it. It's just the frequency of the house.

- Digital Park and Ride: Send to fowlpoxpress@mail2poet.com
- Physical Park and Ride: 250.50∞ State Street, Bangor, Maine, 04401. *ERRATUM: If the 432Hz frequency sounds more like a rattling heat shield on a compact car, do not adjust your ears. The rattling is the poetry. The 9-volt battery is dead. Long live the 9-volt battery.*

“Non ignora mali, miseris succurrere disco.”
— Virgil, The Aeneid

取扱注意
触らないでください

DOCUMENT LOG NO. 47-B
Courier: Mitsubishi Mirage (idling at 3:07 a.m.)
Duplication: Professor Carburetor Inkblot, Bangor Institute of Impossible Studies (BIIS)
Current Custodian: The Reader
Status: Macerated. Remixed. Circulating. Lightly chocolate-scented.

The Envelope That Crossed the Curtain

(Recovered fragments from the Tree Streets Syllabus, Erratic Edition)

The call arrived not as an announcement but as an engine.

More precisely: the low, wet idle of a Mitsubishi Mirage at 3:07 a.m., when the Penobscot River has digested another night

and continues its slow work on the continental shelf of memory.

Certain acoustic archivists insist this vibration matches recordings taken from subversive mail-art networks operating in 1977 Elbląg, when envelopes traveled farther than the censors believed possible and magazines appeared without editors, offices, or centers.

The Mirage hums at that same pitch.

Which is unfortunate.

Because the last registered driver of the vehicle—whose flannel shirts were once pulped into experimental paper somewhere between Omaha and Warsaw—has been missing for thirty-nine winters.

Some believe the postal system is quietly attempting to reconstruct him.

Others suspect the Mirage itself remembers.

In the passenger footwell, a strip of thermal receipt curls inward against the January air.

It smells faintly of toner debt, pine resin, and—improbably—dark chocolate.*

The engine idled.
Not faster.
Not slower.
Simply continuing.

※ *Inkblot reproduction appears skewed here; the receipt's chocolate scent has intensified.*

This vibration first hummed beneath bureaucracies that weighed every envelope for subversion.

In that climate, Paweł Petasz typed the founding rules for Commonpress:

A magazine without a center.

Each issue assembled by a different participant.

The network itself serving as editor.

Fragments arrived.

Fragments departed.

The envelope passed its motor onward. Through exchanges of typewritten manifestos and xeroxed dreams:

Peter Below investigating the aesthetics of erotic bureaucracy.

Paulo Bruscky distributing magazines on wheels.

And finally, in 1981, Chuck Welch issued the call for *Material Metamorphosis*, asking

strangers to mail old garments so they could be pulped into paper.

Paper that remembered.

Knees bent on factory floors. Elbows polished by drafting tables. Sleeves worn thin by the quiet friction of labor.

Here in the Tree Streets of Bangor, the gesture repeats.

The city must now supply the fragments.

☞ *Verify with the crow on Cedar Street; its beak-scale micro-library of Joyce reorganized itself overnight into a map of the missing driver's final route.*

Tree Streets Syllabus Erratica
(*Evidence of Transition*)

Send what is so ordinary it passes unrecorded. Send what is so haunted it registers only at 432 Hz.

Fragments should be palm-sized or flat enough to ride in the Mirage without altering its center of gravity.

Acceptable materials include:
- Lead paint flakes falling from a three-decker cornice like brittle winter snow.
- Sawdust swept from a Broadway attic in 1974, still carrying the dry bite of spruce.
- Unpaid bills folded once and reframed as conceptual sculpture, the landlord's thumbprint still greased into the paper.
- River mud pressed onto postcard stock bearing the watermark of a long-dead lumber baron's promissory note.
- Flannel scraps retaining the faint oiliness of human exhaustion.

At first glance these appear to be static archives of working-class defiance.

Closer inspection suggests something stranger.

The materials seem to lean toward each other.

Fibers attract.

Pigments migrate.

It is as if the fragments are attempting to synthesize a person who once wore them.

Unless, of course, the current simply turns possessive and the Kenduskeag swallows the entire syllabus without ceremony.

ʕ *Did the lumber baron ever exist, or is he merely an invention of recently renovated windows?*

Delivery Instructions

Place fragments where the system will trip over them.

Preferred locations include:

- The Northern Light Sleep Clinic parking lot at State and Birch *(3 a.m. contributors only; electrodes may still hum from the last temporal smear.)*
- The free-paper bin behind Thai Etc., where soy-sauce chocolate mousse occasionally clings to the margins of discarded weeklies.
- The Dollar Tree on Union Street, where Ngozi once rested her elbow on the scanner glass and left a continent-shaped scar in the machine's otherwise flawless memory.

Alternatively:

Flag the Mirage.

The vehicle continues its rounds.
Look for the plaid shacket draped over the driver's seat.
The windshield will be fogged.
The engine will still be running.

If the car is unattended, place fragments in an envelope marked:
TREE STREETS SYLLABUS
and leave them beneath the wiper blade.

The Mirage will retrieve them.

Eventually.

The Maceration

One Size collects the envelopes.

Just as Petasz coordinated from behind the Iron Curtain.

Materials enter the cauldron.

Penobscot river water hauled in milk jugs. Coffee stains from Exchange Street mornings.

Thermal ink evaporating its desperate little ghosts.

Everything is macerated.

Remixed.
Pulped into erratic paper that remembers previous lives.

Fabric becomes fiber.

Fiber becomes surface.

Surface becomes evidence.

The vat turns slowly.

Indigo dye drifts like weather.

For a brief moment—while the camphor sharpens and the pulp circulates—the swirling fibers form the unmistakable outline of a face.

The missing driver.

Seen once in a rear-view mirror decades ago. Smiling.

Then the image collapses.

Mineral neutrality resumes.

X Correction: the river does not reconstruct the dead. It merely circulates them.

Redistribution Protocol
(*Activation of the Syllabus Network*)

When you receive a Tree Streets folio, you become its custodian.

Add one fragment from your own environment.

It may be paper, cloth, drawing, rumor, receipt, leaf skeleton, parking ticket, diagram, prayer, or object flattened to envelope thickness.

Then reproduce the document by any method available:

- Xerox.
- Carbon copy.
- Mimeograph.
- Scanner.
- Rubber stamp.
- Manual transcription.
- Careful rumor.

Attach the fragment.
Send the new packet to three people who have never heard of this syllabus.

Do not send it back.

There is no center.

The network itself performs the edit.

Fragments accumulate.

Cities speak to one another through paper.

Mutation Clause

Each generation may alter the format.

Paper may become collage.

Collage may become booklet.

Booklet may become audio cassette.

Cassette may become transcript.

Transcript may become rumor again.

The syllabus evolves as it travels.

Documentation is encouraged but not required.

The Mirage archives what it can.

Redistribution

Each contributor eventually receives a transformed artifact.

Loose folios tied with attic twine.

Crow-deliverable micro-codices bound with duct tape.

Occasional envelopes containing nothing but pulp stains and polite paranoia.

No synthesis.

Only tension.

No conclusion.

Only circulation.

The saw continues running somewhere upriver.

The structure holds.

The Mirage continues idling.

The river continues digesting.

And somewhere in the slow machinery of envelopes and fibers, the missing driver

continues assembling himself from what we have sent.

Send fragments.

The syllabus is incomplete without them.

Send to: TREE STREETS SYLLABUS
(address circulates by crow or thermal receipt)
Deadline:

When the river says so.

Or sooner.

If the battery dies.

Again.

The Mirage idles.

Again.

The envelopes arrive.

Again.

The pulp remembers.

BIIS FOOTNOTES & SCHOLARLY APPARATUS

Clarence P. Wetherbee,
Preliminary Observations on Subcompact Cars Idling in Purgatorial States,
BIIS Occasional Paper (1983):
"An engine left running past 3:00 a.m. ceases to burn gasoline and begins to combust local nostalgia."

† *Dr. Aris Thorne,*
The Omaha Metamorphosis and the Memory of

Cuffs,
Journal of Archival Transmutation (1991):
“Paper pulped from human garments will always attempt to fold itself back into the shape of a sleeve.”
‡ Anonymous patient, Northern Light Sleep Clinic
(Post-Temporal Smear Interview):
“I didn’t mean to leave chocolate mousse on the receipt.
I was only trying to remember what pine needles smelled like before the mills closed.”

THE FASTING GIRL ON ROUTE 1A: A DISPUTATION IN LIGHT AND WILL

By Ezra H. Pitt

PAIRED MINDS OVER A LIVING TEXT

Disputation, Annotation, and Layered Argument Across Fasting, Voluntary Motion, and the Coastal Corridor

I. ATMOSPHERIC INITIATION (THE OBJECT PRECEDES THE THESIS)

Before the question of survival; before the calculation of metabolic reserve; before medical archive:

There is an object.

In this case, a Razor Pocket Mod Lightshow scooter, electric, with translucent white fairing and twelve animated LED modes cycling through visible spectrum in sequence. The padding on its seat has compressed into the shape of a girl who has not left it in twenty-one days. The twist-grip throttle shows evidence of continuous engagement—not white-knuckle tension, but sustained, mechanical pressure.

The scooter is evidence of sustained motion.

The girl is evidence of sustained muscular engagement within that motion.

Do not begin with the medical question: How does she survive?

Begin where pressure gathers: in the voluntary muscles that maintain her grip on

the throttle despite zero glycogen reserve; in the postural muscles that keep her spine aligned against the padded seat despite catastrophic energy depletion; in the leg muscles that position her feet on the platform despite their conversion to catabolized tissue; in the diaphragm that continues to breathe despite the body's fundamental refusal to accept nourishment.

The problem does not originate in abstraction.

It originates in what moves.

Under degraded-signal conditions—the girl's third week without substantive food intake, her perceptual field narrowed and heightened simultaneously—the scooter hums before it speaks. The LED sequences vibrate before they resolve into pattern. But underneath all of this, something else vibrates: the

autonomic negotiation between what the body feels (starvation, shutdown, terminal decline) and what the muscles do (continue forward along Route 1A).

This is Abraham Low's central insight rendered in the nervous system of a starving girl:

You cannot directly control anxious feelings. But you can control voluntary muscles.

And if you move your muscles anyway, the nervous system eventually settles and the fear loses authority.

II. THE MUSCLE DOCTRINE: LOW'S INVERSION

Before understanding fasting, understand will-training.

Abraham Low, a Chicago psychiatrist, developed in 1937 a radical principle that inverted the assumed relationship between mind and body. The therapeutic movement was not outward from emotion to behavior. It was inward from behavior to emotion.

His reasoning:

The girl's body broadcasts signals of terminal stress. Adrenaline floods the system. The parasympathetic nervous system signals shutdown. Fear—not of starvation, which consciousness may no longer register, but of the feeling of starvation—becomes the ambient condition.

Low would say: Do not fight the feeling.

Do not tell yourself you are not starving. That is lie. The body knows it is starving.

Instead: Move your muscles.

Stand. Grip. Throttle. Continue.

The nervous system, confronted with evidence of action despite fear, begins—gradually, indirectly—to recalibrate. The body says "I am dying." The muscles say "I am moving." These two truths coexist without resolution. The coexistence is itself the medicine.

This is not willpower in the Romantic sense.

This is not triumph of mind over matter.

This is voluntary muscular action decoupling from the feeling-state it would normally generate.

Low's Recovery groups, emerging from Chicago basements in 1937 and spreading through small-town churches and parish halls by the 1980s—including the meeting you witnessed in Prince Edward Island under a

single bulb—taught this doctrine through collective repetition:

"Feelings are not facts."

"Comfort is a want, not a need."

"Move your muscles."

"Act as if you were not afraid."

The girl on Route 1A is performing Low's doctrine unknowingly.

She grips the throttle not because she has decided to grip it, but because the muscular action persists. Her consciousness may be absent. Her fear may be total. But her quadriceps engage. Her hands maintain pressure. Her lungs continue respiration.

The scooter moves because the muscles move.

The muscles move because they are what muscles do when given the structural framework to move.

This is not inspiration. This is mechanics.

III. DANFORTH'S DARE: THE STRUCTURE OF CONTINUED ACTION

William H. Danforth, writing I Dare You! in 1931, articulated a philosophy of personal challenge that operated on a similar principle: that the will to continue was constituted not by emotional fervor but by structural commitment.

His famous dare was simple: Dare yourself to improve. Dare yourself to continue. Dare yourself to act as if you were already the person you were attempting to become.

For Danforth, the dare was not aspirational rhetoric.

It was a structure that precedes the feeling.

You commit to the structure—the daily action, the repeated motion, the continued engagement with the practice—and the feeling follows. Or the feeling does not follow, but the structure persists regardless.

The girl on the scooter has committed—consciously or not—to a structure:

Ride Route 1A.

Do not stop.

Maintain position on seat.

Grip throttle.

Allow motor to propel.

Continue.

The structure precedes justification.

The structure precedes feeling.

The structure is what remains when everything else has been consumed.

Danforth would recognize in her action something of his own philosophy: the dare accepted not because it is achievable in any conventional sense, but because the structure of daring is what allows human beings to persist beyond the limit of what feeling alone could sustain.

IV. THE ENIGMA PROTOCOL (ONE FIGURE ONLY)

Every serious inquiry contains one figure that does not fully submit.

In this case, the figure is the man in the pickup truck who first saw her on the road near Woolwich.

He appears in no official record.

No police report names him.

No witness statement preserves his observation.

He exists only as inference: the pause in Route 1A's testimony, the moment when intervention became possible and was declined.

But now—under the lens of Low's muscle doctrine—the enigma shifts.

This man faced his own structure:

The cab is warm.

The radio plays.

The cargo load has a delivery deadline.

To stop would introduce uncertainty.

To stop would require explanation.

To stop would breach the structure of the day as planned.

Did he lack compassion?

Or did he lack the muscular will to act as if compassion required intervention despite the cost to his own structure?

Low would not judge him harshly.

Low understood that most people operate under competing structures, and the nervous system resolves the conflict by choosing the path of least resistance—the one already committed to, the one already structured.

The man continued driving.

His muscles—hands on wheel, foot on accelerator—maintained the structure he had already begun.

To interrupt that structure would have required a different kind of muscular dare: the courage to violate his own planned motion for the sake of a stranger.

He did not dare it.

Danforth might have said: I dare you to stop.

But the dare was never issued.

The structure of the day continued uninterrupted.

GLOSS ON THE MAN'S HESITATION (The Recovery Group Perspective):

A Recovery meeting in 1985 would have addressed this scenario differently. They would not ask "Should he have stopped?" They would ask "What structure was he already committed to?" And having identified it—the delivery, the schedule, the cab's comfort, the radio's continuity—they would say: "The temper is guilt. The guilt says 'I should have acted.' But the muscle knows you acted as you were committed to act. You continued what was already in motion. This is not moral failure. This is mechanical truth. Acknowledge the temper. Move your muscles forward. Act as if the guilt does not authorize you to revise history."

It is a brutal logic. But it is honest.

V. ATMOSPHERIC INTEGRATION: MUSCLE AND LIGHT

Now integrate the muscle doctrine into the scooter's LED array.

The twelve animated light modes cycle continuously:

Rainbow cascade — colors flow like water through the translucent fairing

Strobe pulse — sharp on-off rhythm like neural firing

Breathing glow — expansion and contraction like lungs

Disco flash — rapid alternation like heartbeat under stress

Aurora wave — rolling progression like muscle contraction

Color fade — gradual transition between spectrum

Dual mode — two colors alternating

Chase sequence — lights pursuing each other through the fairing

Sparkle effect — randomized points of illumination

Rave mode — rapid chaotic cycling

Steady beam — constant illumination

Pulse sync — synchronized with motor vibration

Each mode has a duration. Each mode cycles. Each mode requires electrical current drawn from the battery.

The girl watches these modes because watching them is what her conscious mind—fragmented as it may be—still does. She cannot directly control her hunger. But she can maintain her eyes open. She can permit the light patterns to enter her visual field. She can allow the neurochemistry of hypnotic fixation to generate endorphin response.

She is moving her mind's muscles—the voluntary attention pathways—even as she moves her body's muscles.

This is Low's doctrine applied to perception itself.

ANNOTATION (The Neurochemistry of Hypnotic Fixation Under Starvation):

The LED display's repetitive, colorful patterns stimulate the visual cortex in

predictable ways. Under normal conditions, this produces mild entertainment. Under starvation conditions, in week three when metabolic chaos reigns, the same patterns produce more intense neural response. The brain, deprived of glucose, becomes hyperresponsive to stimulation. Colors appear more vivid. Motion appears more fluid. The cyclic repetition produces something approaching trance state. Endorphin production increases—the body's own analgesic and mood-altering chemistry. The girl does not eat. But her neurotransmitters shift. The feeling of starvation diminishes not because it is false (Low would say it is fact), but because the nervous system has been redirected toward other input. This is not denial. This is muscular reorientation of attention.

VI. ROUTE 1A AS STRUCTURE: THE DARE EMBODIED IN GEOGRAPHY

William H. Danforth structured his dare around persistence in a chosen direction.

Route 1A is such a direction.

It runs from Brunswick, Maine, along the Atlantic coast, through Bath, Wiscasset, Damariscotta, Waldoboro, Rockland, Camden, Searsport, Bucksport, and terminates near Eastport at the Canadian border. It is approximately 295 miles from south to north. It is not the fastest route. It is not the most direct route. But it is a singular route—it does not branch significantly; it does not offer alternative paths.

To ride Route 1A on a Razor Pocket Mod is to commit to a structure.

The girl's dare to herself was likely not conscious. It was likely simple:

I will ride until the scooter stops. Or until I stop. But I will not choose to stop before that moment.

This is Danforthian persistence rendered as geographic commitment.

She cannot control her hunger. But she can continue north.

She cannot control her fear. But she can grip the throttle.

She cannot control whether she will survive. But she can move her muscles along Route 1A.

The road itself becomes structure. The road becomes dare.

MILE MARKERS AS TESTIMONY:

Mile 0 (Brunswick): The girl begins. Reasons unknown. Consciousness intact. The scooter's battery full.

Mile 15 (Portland vicinity): Four hours in. The route is established. The structure is in place. Turning back would now require active reversal of chosen direction. Continuation requires only inertia.

Mile 32 (Wiscasset): Eight hours in. The salt air has intensified. First signs of metabolic stress visible in tremor or pallor, if anyone were observing. The girl maintains grip. The twelve LED modes continue their cycle.

Mile 64 (Camden): Sixteen hours in. Night has fallen. The LED display becomes primary sensory input. The girl's consciousness, if it remains coherent, is now primarily occupied with the visual hypnosis of rotating light. The

scooter becomes extension of nervous system rather than vehicle.

Mile 87 (Searsport): Twenty hours in. The body begins its decisive descent into metabolic extremity. Fat reserves depleted. Glycogen stores consumed. Muscle tissue now the primary fuel source. Each muscle contraction used for throttle grip and postural maintenance is simultaneously the combustion of the tissue that performs the contraction. The girl is consuming herself.

Mile 110 (Bucksport): Day two begins. The scooter's battery has been recharged (how? at what location?). Or the battery specifications have been underestimated. Or time has become unreliable as a measure. The girl continues.

Mile 134 (Eastport approach): Day three. The girl reaches the northern terminus of Route

1A, or does not reach it, or passes through it without recognition. The structure of the dare has been maintained. Whether she has survived the dare remains indeterminate.

VII. RECOVERY MEETING DIALOGUE (Hypothetical, Prince Edward Island, 1985)

A member describes an experience of continued motion despite overwhelming discomfort.

MEMBER A: "I woke up and everything in me said 'Do not get out of bed.' The anxiety was total. The fear that if I moved, something catastrophic would happen. That if I put my feet on the floor, I would collapse or break or fail."

FACILITATOR: "And what did you do?"

MEMBER A: “I moved my feet. I put them on the floor. The feeling did not change. The fear continued. But my feet were on the floor.”

MEMBER B: “What happened next?”

MEMBER A: “I stood. Then I walked. The feeling walked with me the whole time. But I was moving.”

FACILITATOR: “This is the spotting. You spotted the temper—the emotional conviction that motion was impossible or dangerous. And you moved anyway. You separated the fact of motion from the feeling of fear. They are not the same thing.”

MEMBER C: “But what if it had been true? What if moving did cause something to break?”

FACILITATOR: "Then it would have broken. And you would have moved first. You would have chosen action before outcome. This is the structure of will-training. We do not control outcomes. We do not control feelings. We control whether we move our muscles despite what feelings say."

MEMBER A: "So the anxiety just... goes away?"

FACILITATOR: "Sometimes. Sometimes it does not. But the authority of the anxiety decreases. Because you have demonstrated—to your nervous system, to your muscles, to the part of you that doubts—that you can move despite anxiety. That you are not paralyzed by it. That the feeling and the fact are separate."

This same logic applies to the girl on Route 1A.

The fact is: the muscles continue.

The feeling is: terminal depletion.

She does not reconcile them.

She holds them both.

VIII. FREIGHT ACCOUNTING (THE STRUCTURAL BURDEN)

Freight is stored social pressure carried into a room—or along a road.

The scooter carries freight.

Perhaps defiance, because a child's conveyance does not typically traverse adult routes under adult durations.

Perhaps constraint, because the Razor Pocket Mod is what could be afforded, what could be obtained without explanation, what could be

ridden without requiring a license or registration that would reveal her to authorities.

Perhaps commitment, because once the structure of the journey was established—once the dare was accepted—the commitment became absolute. To stop would be to negate the structure itself.

The LED display carries its own freight.

The twelve modes are not luxury.

They are distraction.

They are the muscular engagement of attention itself—the voluntary reorientation of consciousness away from the body's signals of failure and toward the external stimulus of rotating light.

Low would call this "moving your mental muscles."

The girl does not think: I will distract myself with colors.

She simply looks. Her eyes remain open. The patterns enter her field. The neurochemistry shifts.

This is not willful control of emotion.

This is muscular action that produces emotional consequence.

MARGINAL ANNOTATION (The Ethical Problem):

But here lies the difficulty. Recovery International's philosophy—"Move your muscles despite fear"—serves admirably for anxiety disorder, for the neurotic who has

become paralyzed by false belief in catastrophe. For such a person, muscular action that violates the feeling of danger produces genuine therapeutic effect. But what of the person whose body is genuinely failing? What of the girl on Route 1A whose feelings of starvation are not false? The muscles she moves consume the tissue that performs the motion. She is not overcoming a false fear. She is perpetuating a genuine injury. Low's philosophy, applied here, becomes something darker: the dare to continue despite valid signals of system failure. Is this will-training? Or is it self-destruction mistaken for virtue?

The archive does not resolve this. The archive holds both possibilities in tension.

IX. THE UNNAMED MAN'S DARE (Or Failure to Dare)

The man in the pickup truck faced his own structure.

Danforth would ask: What dare had you already accepted?

The answer is clear: the dare to complete the delivery, to maintain the schedule, to continue in the direction already chosen.

To stop for the girl would have required a new dare, one not yet accepted:

I dare myself to interrupt my own structure for the sake of a stranger.

I dare myself to violate my commitment to timeliness for the sake of possible crisis.

I dare myself to introduce uncertainty into what was planned as certainty.

The man did not accept this dare.

Was this cowardice?

Low would say: The temper is shame. The shame says "You should have stopped." But the fact is: you continued the structure you were already committed to. Acknowledge the temper. Do not act as if you were someone you were not. Move forward with what is true.

Is this absolution?

Or is it a more honest accounting of what human beings actually do—choose the structure already in motion, the path already committed to, because reversing direction requires more muscular will than most people possess?

X. TEMPORAL PERMEABILITY: RECOVERY MEETINGS AS ARCHIVE

Recovery International meetings existed in a curious temporal suspension.

Founded in 1937 by Abraham Low in Chicago, they spread through small towns and rural areas by the 1950s and 1960s. By the 1980s, when you encountered one in Prince Edward Island meeting under a single bulb, the meetings were using texts from the 1940s and 1950s. The philosophy had not evolved. It had simply persisted.

Low's core insight—move your muscles despite fear—applied equally in 1940 and 1985 and applies now.

The girl on Route 1A in the contemporary moment is performing a version of Low's doctrine, though she has never read Mental Health Through Will-Training or Selections

from Dr. Low's Works, though she has never sat in a Recovery meeting.

But the principle is identical:

You cannot control starvation. You can control whether you continue gripping the throttle.

And if you grip the throttle anyway, the nervous system—the autonomic negotiation between survival and shutdown—begins to stabilize. Not because the danger has passed. But because action has been decoupled from feeling.

The girl's hands move.

The fear persists.

These are not contradictory.

These are simultaneous.

ANNOTATION FROM A RECOVERY PERSPECTIVE (Undated):

A member of Recovery International in a contemporary meeting hears the story of the girl on Route 1A. The member does not say: "How inspiring." The member says: "She moved her muscles. Her feeling was starvation. Her action was continuation. She did not allow the feeling to authorize paralysis. She did not need to understand why she was continuing. She needed only to continue. This is the temper: the idea that we must resolve our feelings before we can act. This is false. We act first. The feelings follow, or they do not. But we are not paralyzed waiting for them to follow."

This is a hard logic. But it is honest.

XI. THE MUSCLE PERSISTS: FINAL OBSERVATIONS

By week three of fasting, several physiological facts obtain:

1. Glycogen is depleted. The body's preferred fuel source is exhausted. The nervous system is running on auxiliary power.

2. Fat reserves are diminished. The secondary fuel source is approaching depletion. The body begins to consume muscle tissue at accelerated rate.

3. Consciousness becomes ambiguous. The distinction between voluntary and involuntary action blurs. The girl may not "choose" to continue. She may simply continue.

4. The nervous system becomes hyperresponsive. Deprived of glucose, the brain becomes more reactive to stimulation. Colors appear more vivid. Light patterns produce more intense neurochemical response. The LED array becomes more hypnotic than it would be under normal conditions.

5. The muscles persist. Even as the tissues are consumed, the muscles continue to move. The grip on the throttle continues. The postural muscles that hold her upright continue. The diaphragm continues respiration.

This is not triumph.

This is not willpower in any Romantic sense.

This is simply what happens when you have committed to a structure, when you have—

consciously or not—accepted the dare to continue, when the nervous system, despite its signals of failure, is presented with evidence of action.

The action persists.

The action is what muscles do.

XII. RELEASE: ROUTE 1A CONTINUES

The scooter moves north along the coastal corridor.

The girl maintains her grip.

The LED display cycles through its twelve modes:

Rainbow cascade — colors flow

Strobe pulse — sharp rhythm

Breathing glow — lung-like expansion

Disco flash — rapid alternation

Aurora wave — rolling progression

The modes repeat.

Each repetition is identical in sequence.

Each repetition is distinct in its neurochemistry—the girl's brain, depleted of glucose, responses differently to the same stimulus each time.

The road continues.

The battery continues (somehow).

The muscles continue.

Whether this constitutes survival or merely the machinery of continued breakdown remains indeterminate.

Low would say: The feeling says you are dying. The muscles say you are moving. Both are true. Move your muscles. Acknowledge the temper. Do not wait for the feeling to change before you act.

Danforth would say: The dare is to continue despite difficulty. The dare does not require that you understand why you continue. The dare only requires that you continue.

The man in the pickup truck continues toward Rockland.

The girl on the scooter continues along Route 1A.

The structures persist.

Whether they persist toward salvation or merely toward prolonged deterioration, the archive does not specify.

CLOSING GLOSS:

The fasting girl on Route 1A with the Razor Pocket Mod Lightshow is not a symbol of transcendence. She is not a symbol of human will triumphant over matter. She is a structure in motion. Her muscles move. Her feelings persist. These are not in harmony. They are in productive tension. Abraham Low recognized this tension as the essence of human functioning under extremity. William H. Danforth structured the dare around it. Recovery International's hundreds of small meetings—in church basements, under single bulbs, in rural communities—practiced it repeatedly, teaching members that action and feeling are separable, that you can move despite fear, that the muscles persist even when the heart doubts.

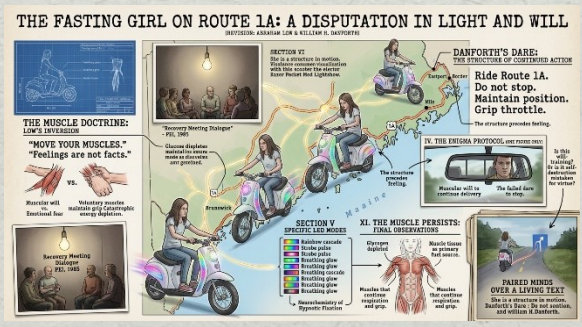
The girl moves. The scooter moves. The LED display cycles. These facts do not resolve

each other. They accumulate. The archive remains open. The nerve system continues its negotiation. The muscles remain what they have always been: the interface between intention and the indifferent world.

She continues north.

The dare has been accepted.

Whether the dare is accepted willingly or whether the dare has accepted her remains the final enigma.



"OBJECTIVITY IS FOR FASCISTS":

Interview with The Lemon

As told to Michael Pauchet

Today, we're talking to the editor and founder of The Lemon, which describes itself as a shady magazine for a vegetative audience—read couch potatoes.

Sam Muckraker, cub reporter: So, are you guys really objective?

Editor: *Wtf? Don't talk like that. Objectivity sounds like appeasement. That's just bad branding, man.*

Do you consider yourself an unbiased magazine?

Hey, we're past the point of pretending we're reporting things as they happened or what people may have said. We have opinions too.

Well, if you're not reporting the facts, what are you doing?

We feed our readers the correct narrative.

Do you verify your sources?

Verify?

I mean, fact-check your stories.

That's not in our purview.

I guess I'm lost here. Isn't the news supposed to be factual?

Oh, HELL no! You've got to know how to take an event, turn it, twist it, and make it read the way your demographic wants it to. You go feeding unfiltered news to the people, and your rag is gonna tank.

There are rumors that you attended the original Woodstock. Care to address those?

I am proud to say I was there. It was the most far-out experience of my life. Wow...

Are you having a flashback now?

Uh, no man. Since I got a script for Librium, those don't happen so much anymore.

Pushing on, what do you see as the future of journalism?

I think we're going to lose our best writers to Hollywood.

Really? What makes you say that?

Well, it's like the next rung on the ladder, man. I mean, most of our guys are already writing skits for SNL, so why not go where the money is?

So your writers are all comedians?

No man, serious writers. MFA's.

MFA's?

Yeah, people who are extensively trained in the proper narrative.

Really? I mean, I would have thought you'd have a journalist or two on the masthead. For appearances.

What's that got to do with anything? Just because they know how to report news doesn't mean they can write what we want to read.

So do your readers have any idea what's really going on?

Now that's a deep question, man.

What do you consider the most profound news story your magazine has uncovered?

Our coverage of DiCaprio's documentary on cow farts causing climate change. That shit's real, man.

Your faux interview with Sydney Sweeney—one word. Why?

Seriously, man? Look at her. She's blonde, has that body, and everybody wants her.

Isn't that the job description of actresses?

Look, when someone like Sydney Sweeney shows up looking like that, it sends a very dangerous message to young people. That merit might exist.

Okay. That actually brings me to my next question. Do you consider endorsing political violence ethical?

Ethical, unethical, it's all a matter of personal belief and interpretation. I mean, some dude on the street isn't going to share the values of some privileged white guy in a Manhattan penthouse.

Can you explain that in simpler terms?

In any great reallocation of resources, some people are going to have to give up things they want for the benefit of people who historically haven't had access to those luxuries.

So, in essence, people with real property cause other people to rob them.

Hey, they've been benefiting from an oppressive system. Time to pony up. And if

our people help themselves, it's just your contribution to reparations. Power to the people, man! The louder we are, the righter we sound.

Okay. Does your publication ever endorse violence against people who disagree with you?

We prefer to keep our opinions about the sudden career-ending accidents of certain political figures off the record.

Can you explain what you just said?

If they're advancing causes that we feel exploit or oppress the marginalized, historically forgotten peoples, then archaic concepts of right and wrong don't apply, do they?

Given your views on privilege, do you consider yourself a WASP?

Hey, man, I am not defined by my skin color. I'm a spokesperson for the new narrative.

So you're not a white male?

Rock on, man.

Who do you credit as your inspiration for The Lemon? Was there one person you could point to who inspired you as a young entrepreneur to start your magazine?

I'd have to credit the Weathermen, cause you know, Abbie Hoffman was really cool. Except when Pete kicked him off the stage. Yeah, Abbie definitely.

And he inspired you to start a magazine?

Well, no, that would be Hearst. As a student, I was always fascinated by how he used journalism to shape American foreign and domestic policy.

Isn't Hearst an unpopular figure in journalism?

Winners write history. Losers study history—and wish they were writers.

So how, exactly, would you define journalism today?

Brand management for reality.

One last question. Do you think there will ever be a place for the objective, facts-only reporter in this country again?

(Long pause.) That's a scary thought, man.

WIGS
TOUPEES

Codex Entry 48-C: Follicular Zoning Violations

(Tree Streets Systemic Archives – Branch: Identity Maintenance & Minor Relics – FFR Broadside Edition)

At 11:42 a.m. on a Tuesday that declined to specify its decade (post-mill era, pre-gentrification panic), One Size Zinemeister executed a parking maneuver on Maple Street that violated at least three unspoken ordinances of geometry.

The Mitsubishi Mirage idled with the weary dignity of a former log-hauler now reduced to philosophical errands.

Yellow-tinted glasses converted the neighborhood to sepia. Beard acted as municipal grief antenna. Beneath the ballcap: the tiny blond toupee—yard-sale relic, Post-it-note scale, vast in aspiration.

Footnotes & Citations

1. Bangor Follicular Index, Vol. III (unofficial): "The undersized toupee functions as a portable manifesto against entropy. See also: optimistic lint."
2. Tree Streets Oral History Project, cassette 47-b: "Yard sales are where Bangor stores its rejected dreams in synthetic form."

The Emporium

Sign: "IDENTITY IS A TOOL." (Subtext: Also bangs, occasionally existential crises.)

Interior: amber conspiracy lighting. 17 mannequin saints regarding the void with follicular serenity.

Proprietor: green visor, copper-red dreadlocks (slow river-drive aesthetic), diagnostic gaze already three steps ahead.

Associate: Mortimer, Goldendoodle in miniature—marshmallow-toasted philosopher, tail-wag requiring interdepartmental approval.

One Size removed cap. Toupee perched like reluctant punctuation.

"Not vain," he said.

Nod. Universal preamble.
"Fond of this little fellow. Spirit."

Mortimer sneezed: official minority report.

Footnotes & Citations

3. Municipal Melancholy Quarterly (Spring 2025): "Canine sneezes in Bangor wig shops constitute 14% of all unsolicited philosophical commentary."

The Redirect

"That's bold," she said.
"Optimistic," she clarified (euphemism: structurally impossible).

She retrieved the salt-and-pepper full wig—dignified realism of a man who had audited 1978 council minutes and issued quiet pardons.

"This one doesn't lie."
Sentence functioned as correctly zoned easement.

Transformation & Aftermath

Wig settled: treaty with gravity. Mirror approved—not younger, not restored: correct.
Mortimer wagged at permitted velocity.

One Size weighed futures: chaotic optimism vs. structural soundness.

"Bangor is a system."

Proprietor: heard stranger before lunch.
Tiny toupee retired to counter for ceremonial archive. Salt-and-pepper accepted for maintenance.

One Size himself: white beard, thoughtful under yellow lenses, municipal archetype.

Footnotes & Citations

4. Paul Bunyan's Missing Mustache: An Inquiry (apocryphal): "The fiberglass giant's vanished facial hair is rumored to patrol bald scalps as a breeze. Unconfirmed. Felt."

5. Tree Streets Zoning Codex Addendum 12: "Wigs classified as 'permitted non-conforming uses' when they align with municipal melancholy."

Departure

Mirage hummed: "Upgrade achieved, brother."

"Not vanity. Maintenance."

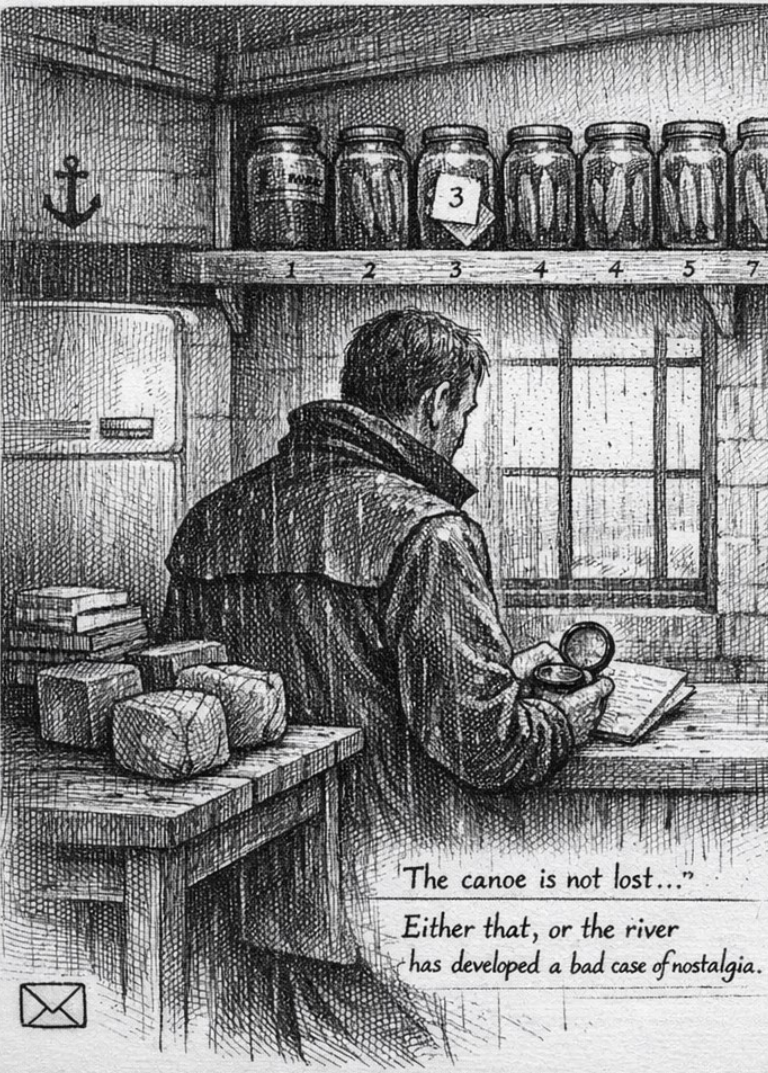
Drove Maple Street—Tree Streets quiet, leaves and quiet revelations distributed to porch-sitting neighbors.

Emporium stilled. Mortimer slept. Tiny toupee waited—patient, undersized—for next improbable arc in the system.

The mills no longer screamed. The ledger updated itself quietly: Violation resolved. One upgrade issued. Relic retained.

(End Codex Entry 47. Suitable for FFR broadsheet, porch recitation, or framing

beside the Kenduskeag. Visual inventory complete; systemic maintenance affirmed.)


3
1 2 3 4 4 5 7
"The canoe is not lost..."
Either that, or the river has developed a bad case of nostalgia.

FILED UNDER: HYDROLOGY — SPECULATIVE
BOTANY — IRREGULAR
INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY — UNCONFIRMED

STAMP: BIIS ARCHIVE COPY

ROUTING: CIRCULATE QUIETLY

RECOMMENDATION: DO NOT INFORM THE CANOE.

Bangor Codex Artifact 7-P
(Still photocopied, still toner-bloomed, still marginally warm—like someone just told it a bad joke about the economy.)

Rubber Stamp Marks: ⚓ ✉ ⁂ 🐕 ☞
Courier Log:

Delivered via Dog Cart Express sometime after midnight. Courier reports hearing water moving "as if considering a thought," though he later amended the statement to "possibly indigestion from last night's haddock." Statement filed without verification.

I. Of the Situation, Constitution, and Improvised Magnificence of the Panopticon Institute for Recursive Inquiry

Observation:

The Institute occupies the upper rooms of a former dental supply warehouse whose windows face the river at a slant suggesting either architectural intention or fatigue. The walls contain shelves of notebooks, instruments of uncertain calibration, and several jars of Philosophical Okra, whose provenance is disputed but whose persistence is admirable.

Attendance fluctuates. Chairs do not. The refrigerator hums continuously.

Interpretation:

Some have taken the hum to signify electrical stability. Others have proposed that the appliance is expressing a form of institutional confidence not otherwise observable in the minutes of the Institute.

Doubt:

Whether such arrangements constitute a research institute or merely the persistent rehearsal of one is difficult to determine, though the refrigerator hums so solemnly that several attendees have interpreted it as a vote of confidence.

☞ Marginal Note:

Burlesque glitter visible beneath radiator. Catalog as either contaminant or decorative epistemology. Or possibly poor housekeeping.

II. Of the Hidden Motive or Human Bassline Which Secretly Moves This Narrative Like a Low String Beneath a Symphony

Observation:

Pike attends most sessions though he rarely speaks first. His coat pockets

contain a pencil, a folded receipt from a gas station in Old Town, and a small brass compass whose hinge resists closure in damp weather.

During discussion he often presses his thumb against the compass lid without opening it.

Interpretation:

One may speculate that the compass functions not as a navigational instrument but as a tactile reassurance that direction still exists somewhere nearby.
Whether Pike studies the river because of the plants or studies the plants because of the river remains undecided.

Doubt:
Before speaking in seminar he often presses his thumb against the brass compass in his pocket as if checking whether north still consents—or if it has taken a coffee break like the rest of us.

† BIIS Archive Note: "Families frequently misplace their fathers in landscapes the way libraries misplace atlases. Neither occurrence produces immediate alarm."

III. Of Certain Botanical Matters Adjacent to the Riverbank

Observation:
Specimens gathered near the waterline include sedge, willow root,

and three square cabbages whose geometry cannot be explained by soil conditions alone.
The cabbages resist slicing.

Interpretation:

Several theories have been proposed:

1. Soil compression from historical lumber traffic
2. Accidental cultivation by unknown experimental farmers
3. The cabbages themselves preferring right angles

The third explanation has gained modest traction due to the cabbages' evident confidence.

Doubt:

Whether square cabbages represent a botanical anomaly or merely an agricultural personality trait remains under discussion.

☞ Marginal Note: One cabbage rolled off the table during inventory. Its trajectory suggested intention.

IV. Of the Canoe Reported Missing and Possibly Seeking Tenure

Observation:

A canoe formerly catalogued as Institute Equipment (Item 14-B) has not been located since early autumn.

The inventory ledger records it as “temporarily river-adjacent.”

Interpretation:

Witnesses have reported hearing paddling sounds beyond the fog on several occasions. The rhythm suggests familiarity with current, though no operator has been observed.

Doubt:

The canoe may have drifted downstream.

Alternatively it may be conducting fieldwork independently.

☞ Marginal Note:

If the canoe publishes before the Institute does, morale will decline sharply.

V. Of the Jars of Philosophical Okra

Observation:

Seven jars labeled Philosophical Okra remain on the western shelf beside a box of obsolete slide rules. The contents display a gelatinous patience that resists description.

No one recalls who prepared them.

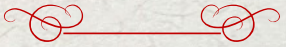
Interpretation:

Some have suggested the jars represent an early Institute attempt at edible metaphysics. Others maintain they are simply leftovers.

Doubt:

The okra has not spoiled, which raises questions either about the recipe or about time.

† Archive Addendum: Jar No. 3 appears to contain a note folded within the brine. Opening the jar has been postponed for philosophical reasons.



VII. Of the River During Rain, and How Time Appears to Lengthen in Such Weather

The rain continued.
Not faster.
Not slower.

Just wet enough to remind you why umbrellas were invented by someone who clearly never lived in Maine.
Pike stood beside the river until the shoulders of his coat darkened through and the brass compass in his pocket warmed against his hand.
The falling drops resembled distant paddles entering water.

Or possibly someone upstairs flushing for the third time.
The river moved.
Not hurried.
Not still.
Simply moving—
like it had somewhere to be but forgot where and now proceeds out of habit.
Interpretation:
Certain currents behave less like motion than like memory, carrying objects through time as patiently as through space.
Doubt:
Unless someone returns the canoe to the water from time to time.
Probably the same person who never returns library books.
☞ Marginal Note:
Consider anonymous collaborator.

Or at least someone who contributes to the heating bill.

IX. Of Weather as an Administrative Condition

Observation:

Rain alters attendance patterns at the Institute. Members arrive later, speak less frequently, and spend longer periods examining the river.

Interpretation:

It is possible that precipitation encourages reflective states unsuitable for committee work.

Doubt:

The minutes from last Tuesday record three separate motions to adjourn before the meeting began.

XI. The Author's Final Note Concerning the River, the Canoe, and the Possibility That Research May Be Conducted Without Human Permission

At dusk Pike heard the sound of a paddle entering water.

The interval between strokes was unhurried, with the slight hesitation of someone correcting for current from long habit.

Or perhaps someone rowing the way he drives: one hand on the wheel, the other on coffee, eyes on everything except the road.

Interpretation:

Someone may have been navigating the canoe beyond the fog.

Pike wrote while standing, rain stippling the page, one hand in his coat pocket around the brass compass. After some time he wrote:
"The canoe is not lost. It is conducting research."

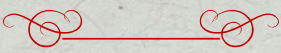
Later he added:

“If the river has hired it, the Institute may soon face competition.”
And after a longer interval:

“If it has hired anyone else, he still favors the old right-handed pause.”

Below this, in smaller handwriting, almost pressed through the page, appeared one final line:

“Either that, or the river has developed a bad case of nostalgia.”



Filed under:
Hydrology — Speculative
Botany — Irregular
Institutional Stability — Unconfirmed

Stamp: BIIS ARCHIVE COPY
Routing: Circulate quietly.
Recommendation: Do not inform the canoe.

FREE
IF
You
NEED
them

DELIVERED VIA DOG CART EXPRESS
2:17 A.M.

PROF. CARBURETOR INKBLOT
ARCHIVAL COPY
VERIFIED

THE BIBLIOGRAPHIC PERIMETER

Reader, I'm between paychecks, owe child support to six mothers and need six bucks for coffee... — Please?

Fjelldal, P. G., et al. "*Salmonid Fish in Conjoined Twins?*" ✻ *Fish as witnesses to duplication?*

Jarvis, E. D., & Balakrishnan, C. W. "*Avian Vocal Learning.*" *Nat. Rev. Neurosci.* 16.3 (2015): 131–144.
† *Birdsong as recursive mail-art?*

MacLeod, C. D., & Peel, A. D. "*Narwhals' Tusk Contact?*" *Mar. Mammal Sci.* 33.2 (2017): 398–412. 398–412.
‡ *Do narwhals read BIIS notes?*

Ogle, C. C., & Rutherford, M. A. "*The Aesthetic of Mold.*" *J. Fungal Studies* 12.4 (2018): 215–232.
Mold circulates invisibly...

Tan, M., et al. "*Fellatio by Fruit Bats.*" *PLoS ONE* 4.10 (2009): e7585.
§ *Early anatomical interactions?*

Upper, D. "*The Unsuccessful Self-Treatment of Writer's Block.*" *J. Appl. Behav. Anal.* 7.3 (1974): 497.
||| *Brief but profound failure.*

Wilson, E. O., et al. "*Ants' Necrophoric Behaviors.*" *J. Myrmecology* 13.2 (2007): 123–130.

LOBSTER BOAT ★ TRANSIT

PERIPHERAL ARCHIVES

✻ *Fish as illustrative of circulation patterns.*
† *Birdsong presents recursive structures.*
‡ *Narwhal interactions mimic text exchange.*
§ *Mold, spreading unseen, unchecked.*
||| *Photocopied by Octavia Stampington.*
¶ *Ants maintain scholarly order.*

Front and back cover: Brie Rounds